Blum’s Bits  
By Amy Blum

*Faith* can be defined in many ways. To some, *faith* simply means having complete trust or confidence in something or someone. Personally, I prefer the classic Bible definition: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1 KJV).

Now, I couldn’t be much further from a preacher, and I’m not writing a sermon. But, given the challenges being thrown at folks in agriculture, I can’t think of a more fitting topic than *faith*.

A lot of us in God’s country hope for rain. We haven’t seen it in a long while; yet, we know it exists. Some of us even have faith that it will come again.

Many of us have watched helplessly as crops and pastures withered away. We’ve eaten dust, baked in the sun and made tough decisions. Some of us maybe even cussed the entire situation. But, we persevered. We pushed through the challenges, took a break when we couldn’t stand anymore and started all over again the next day.

To me, faith lies at the heart of why many of us continue to move forward, especially in times of devastation, but also in times of celebration.

This summer, I shared in two wildly different life situations. They were occasions that forever altered my perceptions and deepened my faith.

In late July, after a healthy nine-month pregnancy, my best friend and her husband unexpectedly welcomed their beautiful daughter to the world in great distress. Just over 17 hours after her arrival, she returned to heaven, and two people I love dearly were left reeling. Every day, they endure a loss more horrific than I can imagine.

I don’t pretend to know or understand their pain for it is not mine to know. Yet, without understanding it, I do know every day presents a choice. A choice to live in faith or die in sorrow. Though being consumed by sorrow may be an “easier” choice, my friends find the substance in their faith necessary to move forward.

At the very opposite end of the spectrum, mid-August brought my great-grandma’s 100th birthday. My contribution to her milestone was a small article for our hometown papers. I’ve been very close to Gramma my whole life, and I thoroughly enjoyed the three hour chat we shared as she thought back over her decades.

Her 100 years have been far from easy. Gramma has experienced loss, heartache and struggles beyond many people’s comprehension. She has buried family and friends and watched helplessly as loved ones struggle. Her body fails her a bit more each year; however, her mind remains sharp.

She raised four children as a rancher’s wife during the Great Depression and can vividly recall grasshoppers devouring wood fenceposts as dirt blew through every nook and cranny of their home.

But, even in her life’s darkest times, Gramma’s faith in God, her family and good friends carried her through. She became a pillar of strength. Gramma celebrated her milestone birthday with the humor and resilience many of us have come to treasure, and in doing so, she displayed the power of having faith behind your hopes and dreams.

As the drought rages on and varying degrees of life continue to surprise us, I pray each of us can retain perspective and hold tight to our faith.

Times are tough, and the months ahead could get a lot harder. But, if you look around, there is also much joy in the world, and where there is joy, there is hope. With hope, we find faith, and with faith, we can endure anything.

So take a moment to step back. Celebrate the ag industry’s youth as they participate in events at state fairs, winter shows and school. Take time to appreciate why young people are so treasured. They represent our past, our present and our future. They carry our hopes and our dreams.

And, as you do all that, remember we all have a choice. A choice to live in faith or die without it.